DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 820 FL 022 144

AUTHOR	Nakuma, Constancio
TITLE	"Sir, Is There Some Rule for That?" A Report on Differences in Foreign Language Learning Approach Styles.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages and Communication for World Business and the Professions (12th, Ypsilanti, MI, March 31-April 3, 1993).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adults; *Cognitive Style; *College Students; Foreign Countries; French; Grades (Scholastic); *Grammar; Higher Education; *Mathematical Aptitude; *Second Language Learning; Sex Differences; Surveys
IDENTIFIERS	Canada

ABSTRACT

"Quantitative-oriented" students of French have been found to display a propensity for formal rules of grammar in university-level French language classes, which departs significantly from that of "letters-oriented" students. "Quantitative-oriented" students include mathematics, commerce, science and engineering majors, while "letters-oriented" students comprise the regular arts majors. Pending a more thorough and controlled psycholinguistic study, it can be concluded, on the basis of the strength of correlation between language-learning behavior (request for formal rules of grammar) and academic orientation (science vs. arts majors), that knowledge of a learner's background in the quantitative components of non-language-related curricula can help F(oreign) L(anguage) teachers to predict the language learning approach style that the learner will most likely prefer. Greater ability to identify the learning approach styles that work best for the FL learner could improve the efficiency of the learning experience, both for the teacher and the student. It is hoped that other L(anguage) for S(pecial) P(urposes) instructors will monitor more closely their students and report any observed learning approach style differences and preferences. More controlled psycholinguistic studies are needed to shed more light on the issue. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 406 820

"Sir, Is There Some Rule for That?"
A Report on Differences in Foreign Language Learning Approach Styles.

Constancio Nakuma (Ph.D)
Assistant Professor
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37996-0460

ABSTRACT:

"Quantitative-oriented" students of French have been found to display a propensity for formal rules of grammar in university-level French language classes, which departs significantly from that of "letters-oriented" students. *Quantitative-oriented* students include mathematics, commerce, science and engineering majors, while *letters-oriented* students comprise the regular arts majors.

Pending a more thorough and controlled psycholinguistic study, it can be concluded, on the basis of the strength of correlation between language-learning behavior (request for formal rules of grammar) and academic orientation (science vs. arts majors), that knowledge of a learner's background in the quantitative components of non-language-related curricula can help F(oreign) L(anguage) teachers to predict the language learning approach style that the learner will most likely prefer.

Greater ability to identify the learning approach styles that work best for the FL learner could improve the efficiency of the learning experience, both for the teacher and the student. It is hoped that other L(anguage) for S(pecial) P(urposes) instructors will monitor more closely their students and report any observed learning approach style differences and preferences. More controlled psycholinguistic studies are needed to shed more light on the issue.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Geoffrey Vaught

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

FL022144

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

With the seemingly widespread acceptance of the idea that communicative competence (as opposed to mere linguistic competence) ought to be the primary goal of F(oreign) L(anguage) teaching and learning, FL pedagogues have tended to strongly recommend the adoption of a "communicative approach" to the teaching of foreign languages by FL teachers. One of the distinguishing features of the communicative approach to FL teaching and learning, and perhaps the most salient feature, is the relegation of "grammar" to a secondary plane and the promotion of the dominant function of language, "communication", to the forefront. Any method of teaching a foreign language which even remotely resembles the more traditional "grammar-translation" approach is viewed with much suspicion and made to appear outmoded, if not assumed *a priori* to be counter-productive. This over-reaction against apparently failed FL methodologies, understandable though it may be, portends yet another failure in FL pedagogy. Underlying the pressure for FL teachers to adopt the communicative approach is the assumption that FL learners are people who have one and the same teleological priority, the need to communicate, and that they are approaching the T(arget) L(anguage) with similar epistemic experiences. These assumptions may not necessarily nor generally hold, as our findings will lead us to argue.

All classroom experience assumes, understandably to varying degrees, some level of homogeneity among learners. Teachers tend to base their choice of teaching strategy, among other considerations, on their feel of the degree of homogeneity of the class. However, it appears that the effectiveness of a teacher depends much on her/his ability to detect and respond promptly and appropriately to visible signs of individual differences in the class, and provide enough variety in the activities and teaching strategies as to reach out individually to the majority of the learners. In prescribing a single approach, which happens to be hostile to the use of metalanguage for grammatical explanation in the FL classroom, defenders of the communicative approach may be inadvertently limiting the latitude of FL teachers to respond to the learning needs of some categories of learners.

This study reports on the preliminary conclusions, reached on the basis of a survey conducted

over a three-year period in university-level French as foreign language classrooms, bearing on the epistemic profile of students who, through the most frequently asked question: "Sir, is there some rule for that?", request the type of grammatical explanation that the communicative approach seeks to discourage in the FL classroom. The author has been teaching the French language at the "intermediate level" in various universities across Canada and the United States for the past 5 years, and has also endeavored to implement the communicative approach to FL teaching in his classroom. He has been so plagued with the above question that he decided to investigate the background of students who ask the question most frequently, through systematic observation and a couple of questionnaires. The title of this report identifies two polar groups, based on the common denominator between students "caught" asking for grammatical rules on the one hand, and those who do not ask frequently on the other. Those who ask for grammatical rules happen to have some firm grounding in the quantitative aspects of the university curricula, being mostly science, engineering, mathematics or commerce majors, or majors-to-be. Then arose the questions as to whether these findings are fortuitous or, on the contrary, whether they reveal some permanent "cognitive style" trend to be recognized by FL teachers and pedagogues; whether the "teaching-for-examination" context within which FL teaching and learning occurs has had any influence on the frequency of occurrence of the observed behavior; and whether metalinguistic skills are perceived by the quantitative-oriented group of students as similar in scope to the mathematical skills they have acquired. Statistical tests lead to the conclusion that the difference in behavior observed between quantitative-oriented students and non-quantitative-oriented ones is not the outcome of mere happenstance. However, more rigorous psycholinguistic tests on language-learning approach style differences, including more specifically the epistemic dimension, which has been consistently overlooked by predecessors, are needed to determine whether this behavior is a permanent cognitive style trend. The other questions are open to speculation and are discussed below under section 4.

1.1. Language-learning approach styles, cognitive styles and the FL teacher.

Featuring among characteristics of good language-learning behavior, hypothesized to be powerful determinants of FL learners' success in acquiring their TL, is the ability of the learner to sustain self-motivation, to exhibit a high degree of cognitive flexibility, and to display a willingness to experiment with new structures in the target language (Cohen 1969, Stern 1975, Rubin 1975, Ramsay 1980). Cognitive style, or the consistent individual tendencies in mental organization of complex phenomena, has been extensively investigated by psychologists and psycholinguists and shown to play a key role in successful language-learning (Witken et al. 1962, Broverman et al. 1968, Schacter 1971, Schacter & Rodin 1974, Nisbett & Temoshok 1976). The term "approach style", which refers to the attitudes expressed by the language learners towards the language learning task, towards the language itself, or even towards themselves in relation to the learning task, as may be perceived through the degree of commitment to the latter (Ramsay 1980), is the more processual variant of the "cognitive style" concept. It emphasizes the notion that success in FL acquisition depends much on the active commitment of the learner. Successful language learners have been identified as those individuals who resort to self-determined "optimal strategies" for abstracting, memorizing, ordering and retrieving salient information on the target language, from their environment.

Although different individuals may be identified as successful language learners, it cannot be assumed that they implement the same set of strategies to achieve success. Much remains unknown as to just how language acquisition occurs, but what is known is that many psychological, social and personal factors come into play to make it possible. In her much known study on language-learning approach styles by adult bilinguals, Ramsay (1980:92) made a number of intuitive remarks about salient characteristics of the successful language learner which, when correctly situated in time and critically examined in light of the findings reported, can be considered as an endorsement of the communicative approach that was then becoming fashionable:

> A new language is a phenomenon upon which the mind may operate, looking at both form and content. "Intent to learn" has been shown to lead to a heightened attention to

> *content* with an accompanying decrement in attention to *form* [Schneider & Kintz 1967]. If these aspects are reciprocals, then as content is beginning to be integrated into the mental organization, there may be small value in stressing form independent of content. Content may make the framework into which later formal information will be fitted. The higher levels of retrieval have been shown to operate on the basis of meaning -- both lexical and syntactic [Reicher 1969, Morton 1970]. If a certain amount of content is processed for meaning and stored in memory before more formal information is taken in, the process of integration and linking to other existing mental structures becomes an ongoing one. This aids in creating criteria for selecting more pertinent information from the raw input. Demanding mastery of form over content may be likened to the type of jigsaw puzzle solver who sits with a group of pieces interlocked by chance and keeps randomly trying to add new pieces to the group. (...). In language learning, freedom to move within an overall conceptualization should result in earlier integration of each new datum, giving earlier and better TL learning.

The implications of these observations for FL classroom dynamics seem clear: the foreign language teacher should set content as "the framework into which later formal information will be fitted"; the FL instructor should also endeavor not to stand in the way of the language learner with excessively constraining guidelines on how the learner ought to approach the foreign language, since "freedom to move within an overall conceptualization should result in earlier integration of each new datum, giving earlier and better TL learning." In that sense, and rather paradoxically, even the communicative approach, with its guidelines on what ought (or ought not) to be the primary focus of the foreign language classroom experience, may turn out to be unduly restrictive of the freedom of movement that is required for successful foreign language learning. As to the question of whether the content should serve as the framework into which the form fits, or vice versa, it could turn out to be a stimulating philosophical debate, but a sterile one in terms of what a foreign language teacher actually does with any given group of foreign language learners. In fact, if it is true, as Corder (1975) suggests, that a learner's motivation to improve wanes as the language learner's interlanguage grammar is sufficiently developed to enable him or her communicate adequately for his or her purposes, then the whole question of whether form should precede content, or vice versa, will have to be answered against the back drop of what the learner ultimately intends to use the language for. It can no longer be assumed that every learner's goal is "communication", whether it is achieved together with or without grammatical correctness. FL learners may just not be as homogeneous a group as FL pedagogues may want to assume. For example, how

correct is the assumption that quantitative-oriented students approach a foreign language in the same way that non-quantitative-oriented students do?

Ramsay (1980) showed that adult bilinguals are more likely than monolinguals to succeed in learning yet another foreign language, although some monolinguals too do succeed in the FL learning task. She did not go so far as to make the point that, in terms of FL learning, bilinguals have an advantage over monolinguals because they have already had the opportunity to try out FL learning approach styles that have worked for them. Accepting her findings, we hypothesize that the bilingual (but not the monolingual), in approaching yet another FL, draws on those very language-learning strategies that have been experimented previously and found to have worked; the monolingual, on the other hand, starts experimenting from scratch with different strategies, having no such epistemic resources, as directly related to language-learning as those of the bilingual, to draw on. What Ramsay's study seems to show is that there is some advantage for bilinguals to seek to implement those learning strategies they have already experimented with successfully.

Indeed, if there is any single compelling message that the overwhelming pool of evidence gathered from cross-linguistic interference research, error analysis, interlanguage studies and S(econd) L(anguage) acquisition research have uncovered with so much consistency, it is that FL learners, in their effort to access the foreign language with greater facility, tend to draw heavily on all of the language-related skills they have already acquired. Cross-linguistic "interference" is perceived especially when the FL learner's attempt to apply already-acquired techniques of symbol capture, processing and playback results in "incorrect" target language output. That interference sometimes occurs does not deter FL learners from drawing on those experiences. On the contrary, and as interlanguage studies tend to reveal (Corder 1967, 1975, Dickerson 1975, Nemser 1971, Selinker 1972, Selinker et al. 1975), FL learners continuously modify, improve and refine their language-mapping strategies.

1.2. Hypotheses

Extrapolating from the above and generalizing on "symbol-set acquisition" strategies that individuals may seek to implement, we hypothesize that mathematics and science majors, who can be characterized as a group of people having successfully acquired a "symbol set" using various strategies, are more likely than arts majors to approach a foreign language as if it were just another "symbol set" that must be mastered. Quantitative-oriented majors are therefore more likely than non-quantitative-oriented majors to approach a foreign language from the angle of explicit "grammatical rules". This is because the "formulae" which they skillfully manipulate in the quantitative sciences, much like the "grammatical rules" in the area of language, are sets of condensed rules which, when correctly applied, generate expected sets of output. In the foreign language classroom in which "formulae" are consciously being avoided, habitual "formulae-users" will be more likely than the "non-formulae-users" to request them. This hypothesis was formulated, and the two polar groups defined, after the first year of this survey.

Furthermore, and on the basis of a distinction between the SMU and ILI groups, (cf. 2.1. below for details), in terms of possible motives for learning French, where learners in the SMU group are learning to be tested by the FL instructor and awarded a paper grade for academic purposes, whereas the ILI groups are not learning to be examined by the instructor nor awarded a paper grade for their performance in the course, we wondered if this distinction would result in differences in the frequency with which requests for rules are made. We hypothesize that the SMU groups, (learners who will be tested and awarded a grade in the course), will be more likely than the ILI groups, (those who will not be tested nor awarded a grade for their performance), to request grammatical rules in class. Underlying this hypothesis is the notion that language acquisition is more of a rule formation process than a habit formation one, and that explicit rules will facilitate the development and refinement of the learner's interlanguage rules.

2.0. METHOD

2.1. Subjects and data collection

Data for this study were gathered over the three-year period, starting from September 1989 through July 1992, that the author taught intermediate level French language and functional French classes to different groups of learners, including undergraduate students in Saint Mary's University, and employees of the Canadian Federal government preparing to write the Level B French Competency exams of the Public Service Commission through the International Language Institute, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Ages and levels of competency in French of the subjects ranged from 18-year-old adolescent false beginners, (French 200 and 250 levels in the Saint Mary's University), to near-retirement-age, highly qualified scientists and researchers, having advanced French language skills (D.R.E.A. group). All courses taught were French language (as opposed to literature or culture) courses, and grammar could therefore be emphasized or de-emphasized by the author as he deemed fit, provided communicative competence was maintained as the goal of the course. For successful completion of their level B proficiency exams, the ILI groups concerned needed to focus on more than getting along communicatively, they also needed to display competence in the manipulation of correct forms.

Over this period, the author was exposed to a total of 126 active and persistent learners. Table I provides a breakdown of the group composition. All the ILI students, with the exception of the (ILI-GEN) group of 4 who were false beginners, were adult scientists or accountants working with the Defence Research Establishment of the Atlantic (D.R.E.A.), or with Parks Canada. The SMU students, on the other hand, were adolescents ranging in age from 18 to 23 years, and having an intermediate level of competence in French.

Given that the main purpose of this survey was to closely monitor and track down the frequency and origin of express requests for grammatical rules during class sessions, students were kept in total ignorance of the fact that their classroom behavior was closely monitored. It was felt that they would adjust their behavior in ways that would distort the true picture if they were made aware of their being

monitored beyond what they knew to be the normal level of monitoring from any language professor. No additional controls were judged necessary, other than the requirement that each student complete a personal information sheet (see Appendix B) at the beginning of the course, and a student survey form (see Appendix C) at the end of the course. The author kept track of requests for rules by session and by person throughout the learning period.

Variations in teaching approach emphasizing or de-emphasizing rules were introduced, as described in table II. Reactions to these changes were recorded indirectly through the student survey form, and incorporated in the discussion of results. Such variation was neither announced nor consciously implemented in any way that would result in disruption of the normal progress of students. From the comments gathered through the student survey form, however, it is clear that the changes were noticed by many of the students, who either applauded or resented them. These patterns were used as corroborative evidence for the general findings.

The only groups which were taught during the first semester through the grammatical rule approach were the SMU200B and ILIPARK2 groups. This was possible thanks to the fact that the author was teaching two groups of the same level within the same time frame. These were the only chances the author got to cross-check the impact that sequencing of teaching approaches might have on the development of preference for given learning approach styles by the students. Nothing further will be said about sequencing, since it did not result in any change in the epistemic profile of students asking for rules from one semester to the next.

2.2. Statistical analysis

A log on each group was maintained, in which the names and number of times each student made requests for grammatical rules were recorded. Information on each subject's academic major was obtained from the "personal information form", while information on their most preferred language learning approach style was provided by each student on the "student survey form". The survey form

Tables I & II

Table I: Group profile by year, highlighting sex and academic major

Year	School	Sex		Academic major		Total
		Male	Female	Quant.	Non-quant	
1989/90	SMU200	8	16	15	9	24
	SMU250	0	10	4	6	10
1990/91	SMU200	6	20	16	10	26
1991/92	SMU200A	5	18	12	11	23
	SMU200B	8	15	8	15	23
	ILI-DREA	5	0	5	0	5
	ILIPARK1	3	2	3	2	5
	ILIPARK2	1	5	4	2	6
	ILI-GEN	3	1	2	2	4
	Total	39	87	69	57	126

Table II: Schedule of teaching approaches by group

Groups (by years)		First 5 weeks/semester	2nd 5 weeks/semester
1989/90	SMU200	No rules	Rules
	SMU250	No rules	No rules
1990/91	SMU200	Rules	No rules
1991/92	SMU200A	No rules	No rules
	SMU200B	Rules	Rules
	ILI-DREA	No rules	No rules
	ILIPARK1	No rules	No rules
	ILIPARK2	Rules	Rules
	ILI-GEN	No rules	Rules

was kept brief, so that it could be completed in less than 5 minutes during a normal class period. It also

allowed students to react to the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching approaches, thereby providing information which was used to ascertain the link between the learners' behavioral patterns and their academic backgrounds.

Correlation analyses were performed for each group, involving the number of requests for grammatical rules on the one hand and sex and academic major on the other. Significance was concluded for all t-tests at the probability level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Results are reported below in section 3 and discussed in section 4.

3.0. RESULTS

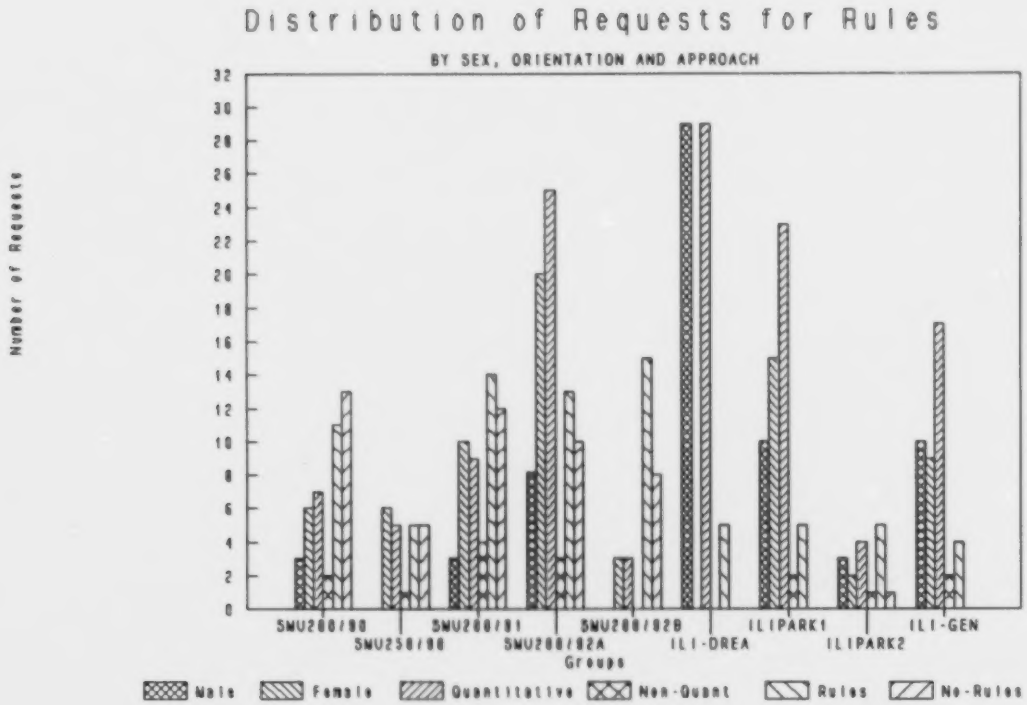
3.1. General trends

Results presented here reflect both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the survey. The hypothesis that quantitative-oriented students would be more likely than non-quantitative-oriented students to request grammatical rules in class was strongly supported. The survey also revealed that males, more so than females, would request such information ($t = 3.37$; $p < 0.01$). SMU students did not differ from ILI students in terms of requests for rules, showing that knowledge of a learner's motive for learning a language, (i.e. for grades vs. not-for-grades), does not provide much information about the type of learning approach style that will be preferred.

3.2. Details of quantitative and qualitative analyses

Tables III and IV are presented in Appendix A. Figure 1 summarizes the pattern of requests recorded per group per period. By an overwhelming and statistically significant margin ($t = 20.4$; $P = 0$), the quantitative-oriented group outperforms the non-quantitative group in terms of number of requests for grammatical rules in class. The accuracy ($R^2 = 0.98$) with which knowledge of the quantitative-orientation of a learner can be used to predict the likelihood of a learner requesting rules contrasts sharply with the relative lack of accuracy ($R^2 = 0.2$) inherent in the use of knowledge of the non-quantitative-

Figure 1



orientation dimension of a learner to predict the latter's pattern of request for rules. As shown in table III (see Appendix A), the number of requests for rules totalled 137 for all groups over the three years of this survey, of which 122, or 89%, were made by quantitative-oriented students, (who represent just slightly over half of the sample size), and 11% by non-quantitative-oriented students, (who represent almost half of the sample). Put in other words, quantitative-oriented FL learners, represented in the ratio of 1.2, are eight times more likely than their non-quantitative counterparts to request grammatical rules.

One would have thought that the imminence of an examination aimed at measuring the extent of language acquisition, as opposed to a non-examination situation, would bring about a difference in the behavior of students in terms of the number of rules they request in class. That was clearly not the case in this survey. Indeed, the ILI groups, which did not have to be tested by the instructor, made slightly

more requests for rules (57%) than the SMU groups (43%), which had to be tested. This difference is however not significant, meaning that the behavior of the two groups is not explainable in terms of the presence or absence of examinations.

Figure 2 shows that choice and maintenance of a teaching style that emphasizes or de-emphasizes explicit presentation of grammatical rules in class throughout the learning experience correlates strongly with the behavior of learners, in terms of whether they will request grammatical explanation or not. Not unexpectedly, the quantitative-oriented students in a class in which rules are not explicitly presented showed that they were more likely to request rules than those in a class in which rules are presented. But even where rules are presented, additional requests for clarification were formulated by the quantitative-oriented students, not by the non-quantitative-oriented students.

Figure 2

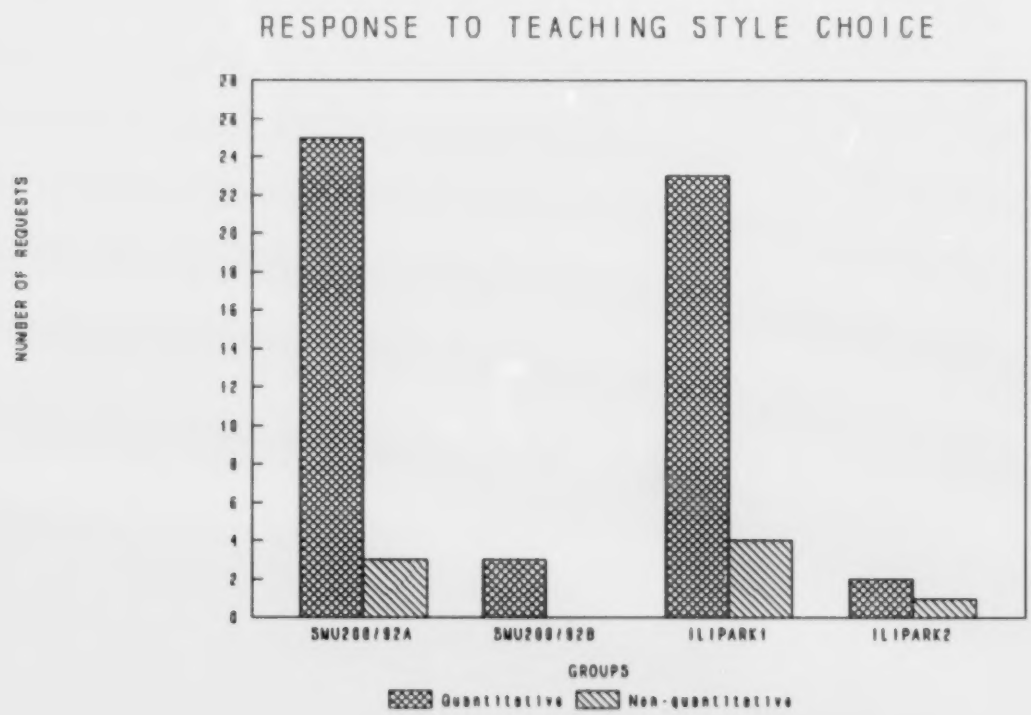


Table III also shows that 73% of the participants expressed preference for a teaching approach

that emphasizes the explicit presentation and explanation of grammatical rules in class. On the student survey forms, different reasons were listed by the participants, explaining their preferences. One of the most eloquently worded reasons for preferring the rule-approach was given by a researcher in the DREA group: "To me, grammatical rules are like slogans which I can easily recall and use to check the correctness of what I say in French." He happens to be one of those who inflated the number of requests for rules in the DREA group, being responsible for as many as 31% of requests formulated by the group. One of the most eloquent explanations made by those students who preferred a teaching method that de-emphasizes rules in class came from an Arts major in the SMU250 group: "Just tell me what to say in French, not how to add and subtract in French." Others say they find grammar "too abstract," and, yet others, "too mathematical."

4.0. DISCUSSION

This survey is not about determining the effectiveness of any given teaching or learning approach style over another. Its focus is limited to gathering information on the academic profile of those students who most frequently ask for grammatical explanation in class, of the type that requires explicit formulation of grammatical rules, information that could be exploited for predictive purposes. The most salient characteristic of those students found engaging most frequently in the behavior investigated turned out to be that they all declared an academic major which had a quantitative orientation to it. We came out with the polar groups called "quantitative-oriented" vs. "non-quantitative-oriented" learners based upon this discovery, made after the first year of the survey. The proposed dichotomy has been statistically validated, which leads us to conclude that the quantitative-orientation of FL learners is a relevant factor in any attempt to identify learning approach styles. These findings suggest that a perspective much broader than that which has been adopted so far by language acquisition researchers is required in all language acquisition research aimed at identifying "learning styles." Such broadened perspective will incorporate the dimension of the epistemic profile of the learner.

It would appear that languages and mathematics share some common features, rooted in the fact that both are basically symbol sets. In a sense, both are "languages", and both are a "means of communication." Learning one or the other entails the deployment of certain mental processes which could be very similar, although languages further require that the learner make an investment in what could be called "physical therapy" -- learning to articulate the sounds of the language -- which mathematics does not seem to require. Mathematics, on the other hand, may seem to require a much higher degree of abstract thinking than languages. Transferability of one learning approach style to another may be a matter of degree rather than of nature, and the attempt by students to transfer mathematical skills to language-learning is quite understandable, even predictable.

If language is a symbol set upon which people draw to communicate with each other, access to a new symbol set of this type need not be indexed on a particular acquisition strategy. Rather, individuals intending to access, adopt and use the symbol set ought to be allowed the latitude they need to enact their most productive strategies. Foreign language teachers, then, ought to regard themselves more as resource centers, upon which "symbol-set acquirers" can freely draw symbols, rather than as active dispensers of symbols, controlling the outflow of the latter. In more concrete terms, FL instructors require more flexibility and versatility in their choice of teaching approach than they can attain with strict adherence to any pre-determined "approach", no matter how acclaimed the latter may be. It becomes disconcerting, in effect, when the language teacher, who is doing everything to stick to the principles of a pre-ordained approach, such as avoid giving out "rules" of grammar to be learned and applied by students, as (s)he is expected to do in order to stay within the bounds of the "communicative" approach, has to repeatedly answer the students' call for rules. Although there is no provision in the communicative approach that constrains the teacher to a rigid position on the issue of how grammar should be taught, the general posture that grammatical correction as a goal is less important than communicative competence leads to a situation in which the use of metalanguage in the FL classroom induces guilt in the instructor, who thinks that much precious time is being spent on "unimportant" aspects of the teaching-learning

experience.

Although the quantitative-oriented students, from our experience, generally appear to have greater facility grasping the language than their non-quantitative counterparts, that issue has not been investigated in this survey. That will constitute our focus in subsequent research. The findings, as reported in this study, cannot therefore be used as the basis to establish a causal relationship between academic orientation and cognitive behavioral pattern. Such strong claims are not the object of this survey. An international investigation being undertaken by Renzo Titone, on the development of metalinguistic abilities by FL students, promises to shed light on what contribution, if any, metalinguistic abilities acquired by individuals can make towards their acquisition of a foreign language.

We expected more SMU students to be requesting grammatical rules than ILI students, for the reasons expressed in the hypothesis formulated under 1.2. This has not been the case. It would therefore seem that examinations have little or nothing to do with the desire of students to obtain grammatical explanation in the form of explicit rules. FL examinations have tended in general to test learners' ability to produce target language output that shows mastery of selected aspects of the functioning of the target language highlighted in class. Tests of communicative competence are generally more difficult to develop, due to the complexity of the skill being tested. The irrelevance of testing in the choice of learning approach style by students, if confirmed by further research, is an interesting finding, in that it points to what a foreign language instructor can or cannot assume about how the learner will approach the language, given the instructor's choice to test or not to test the learner during the learning experience. Explicit grammatical explanation in class has often been viewed as necessary, if the learner is to be tested for linguistic competence. This may not be all that necessary, as far as the learners are concerned, who either prefer or do not prefer rules depending on the epistemic experiences they bring to the language classroom.

5.0. CONCLUSION

Close monitoring of classroom behavior of intermediate and advanced level French students has revealed that students with a strong quantitative orientation in their academic background are eight times more likely than their non-quantitative-oriented counterparts to request grammatical explanation in the form of rules. Males are more likely than females to request grammatical rules. Whereas rules would seem to facilitate students' performance on examinations, there was no significant difference, in terms of the number of requests for rules made in class, between those groups which would be examined and those which would not. All these findings open up room for speculation and further research. Are language and mathematics symbol sets which can be accessed through the deployment of certain "metalinguistic" skills? Any confirmed relationships will have obvious implications for FL and LSP pedagogical theory and practice.

References

Bley-Vroman, R. 1980. The comparative fallacy in interlanguage studies: the case of systematicity. *Language Learning* 33(1): 1-17.

Broverman, D. M., E. L. Klaiber, Y. Kobayashi, & W. Vogel. 1968. Roles of activation and inhibition in sex differences in cognitive abilities. *Psychological Review* 75, 23-50.

Cohen, R. A. 1969. Conceptual styles, culture conflict, and nonverbal tests of intelligence. *American Anthropologist* 71 (1): 828-856.

Corder, S. P. 1967. The significance of learners' errors. *IRAL* 5: 161-170.

Corder, S. P. 1975. The language of second-language learners: the broader issues. *Modern Language Journal* 58: 409-413.

Dickerson, L. J. 1975. The learner's interlanguage as a system of variable rules. *TESOL Quarterly* 9: 401-408.

Morton, J. 1970. A functional model for memory. In *Models of human memory*. D.A. Norman, (ed.). Academic Press. New York, N.Y.

Nemser, W. 1971. Approximative systems of foreign language learners. *IRAL* 9: 115-123.

Nisbett, R. E. & L. Temoshok. 1976. Is there an "external" cognitive style?. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 33 (1): 36-47.

Ramsay,R. M. G. 1980. Language-learning approach styles of adult multilinguals and successful language learners. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 345: 73-96.

Reicher, G. 1969. Perceptual recognition as a function of meaningfulness of stimulus material. *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 81: 275-80.

Rubin, J. 1975. What the "good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly*. 9 (1): 41-51.

Schacter, S. 1971. Some extraordinary facts about obese humans and rats. *American Psychologist* 26: 129-144.

Schacter, S. & J. Rodin. 1974. *Obese humans and rats*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Potomac, Md.

Schneider, F. & B. Kintz. 1967. An analysis of the incidental-intentional learning dichotomy. *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 73 (1): 85-90.

Selinker, L. 1972. Interlanguage. *IRAL*. 9: 115-123.

Selinker, L., M. Swain & G. Dumas. 1975. The interlanguage hypothesis extended to children. *Language Learning* 25:139-191.

Stern, H. H. 1975. What can we learn from the good foreign language learner? *Canadian Modern Language Review* 31 (4): 304-318.

Witken, H., A. Dyk, H. Faterson, H. D. Goodenough & S. Karp. 1962. *Psychological differentiation: studies of development*. Wiley. New York, N.Y.

Appendix A

Table III: Number of requests for rules by sex and orientation/Distribution of subjects by approach style.

Group	Sex Male	Female	Orientation Quant	Non-Quant	Total	Approach Style Rules (raw numbers)	No-Rule	Class Size	Approach Style Rules (as % of class size)	No-Rules
SMU200/90	3	6	7	2	9	11	13	24	46	54
SMU250/90	0	6	5	1	6	5	5	10	50	50
SMU200/91	3	10	9	4	13	14	12	26	54	46
SMU200/92A	8	20	25	3	28	13	10	23	57	43
SMU200/92B	0	3	3	0	3	15	8	23	65	35
ILI-DREA	29	0	29	0	29	5	0	5	100	0
ILIPARK1	10	15	23	2	25	5	0	5	100	0
ILIPARK2	3	2	4	1	5	5	1	6	83	17
ILI-GEN	10	9	17	2	19	4	0	4	100	0
Total	66	71	122	15	137	77	49	126	73	27

Table IV: Regression Analysis

Male by Number of Requests Regression Output:	
Constant	8.61
Std Err of Y Est	6.77
R Squared	0.61
No. of Observations	9
Degrees of Freedom	7
X Coefficient(s)	0.89
Std Err of Coef.	0.26
t-statistic	3.37

Female by Number of Requests Regression Output:	
Constant	8.92
Std Err of Y Est	9.52
R Squared	0.24
No. of Observations	9
Degrees of Freedom	7
X Coefficient(s)	0.79
Std Err of Coef.	0.52
t-statistic	1.52

Quantitative by number of Requests Regression Output:	
Constant	1.48
Std Err of Y Est	1.40
R Squared	0.98
No. of Observations	9
Degrees of Freedom	7
X Coefficient(s)	1.01
Std Err of Coef.	0.04
t-statistic	20.4

Non-Quant by Number of Requests Regression Output:	
Constant	12.2
Std Err of Y Est	10.7
R Squared	0.05
No. of Observations	9
Degrees of Freedom	7
X Coefficient(s)	1.76
Std Err of Coef.	2.86
t-statistic	0.61

Non-rule teaching by requests Regression Output:	
Constant	1.40
Std Err of Y Est	1.58
R Squared	0.99
No. of Observations	4
Degrees of Freedom	2
X Coefficient(s)	1.04
Std Err of Coef.	0.07
t-statistic	14.1

Rule teaching by requests Regression Output:	
Constant	1.85
Std Err of Y Est	5.65
R Squared	0.87
No. of Observations	4
Degrees of Freedom	2
X Coefficient(s)	6.7
Std Err of Coef.	1.78
t-statistic	3.74

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix B

Personal Information Form

LAST NAME:_____ First name:_____

Student number:_____ Year at SMU:____ status:{P-t,F-t,Aud.}____

Local Address:_____ Home Address:_____

_____ _____

_____ Postal code_____ _____ Postal code_____

Phone: ( ) _____ Phone: ( ) _____

State your main reason for taking this course:

_____

French Background:

Language spoken in your family:_____

Did you take a French course in the last 12 months? _____ At what level?_____

If no, what was the last French course you took?_____ When?_____

Did you ever attend an immersion course or school? _____ How long?_____

Where?_____

For how long have you been studying (or have studied) French?_____

Circle each grade in which you took French: P, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Current Program/Activities:

University degree(s) previously obtained, if any: _____

Program enrolled in at SMU:_____

Expected year of graduation:_____ Major:_____

Have you a career in mind? _____ What?_____

Have you a job presently?_____ Hours per week:_____ nature of job:_____

List of courses attending concurrently:

First Semester Second Semester:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Is there anything about you that you think I should know in order to be a better teacher to you?_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix C

Student Survey Form

To help me improve upon the method of teaching this course, I would appreciate your honest responses to the following questions. Your answers will be anonymous and cannot be used in any way against you. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Course number and section:_____

2. If you could advise your French teacher to teach you using only one of the following teaching methods, which one would you advise him to adopt?

   ☐ Explicitly state grammatical rules and provide examples to illustrate how they are to be applied.

   ☐ Avoid stating grammatical rules and just teach how to communicate under different circumstances.

3. State why you prefer the choice you just made.

4. What was the best thing you liked about the way the course was taught?

5. What was the worst thing you disliked about the way the course was taught?

Once again, thank you for your contribution.